



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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## **Governor Gregoire proclaims March 17 as National Ag Day**

**OLYMPIA** – Move over St. Patrick. The wearin’ of the green on Thursday may also be in recognition of National Ag Day.

Governor Christine Gregoire has issued a proclamation declaring March 17 as National Ag Day. The state House of Representatives and Senate also approved floor resolutions recognizing National Ag Day.

“I appreciate the governor and Legislature recognizing the importance of agriculture in our state,” said Valoria Loveland, director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). “The reason we want to bring attention to National Ag Day in Washington is to increase public awareness of the strength and diversity of agriculture. Agriculture represents 13 percent of the state’s economy and is the number one employer in this state.”

National Ag Day is sponsored by the Agriculture Council of America. The purpose of National Ag Day is to educate the public about the essential role that agriculture plays in maintaining a strong economy and providing a safe, abundant, secure and affordable source of food.

In her proclamation, Gov. Gregoire notes that Washington is the ninth largest grower of agricultural crops in the nation. Washington is the number one producer of apples, hops, lentils, sweet cherries, pears, Concord grapes, red raspberries and spearmint oil.

As part of the celebration, representatives from the Washington Farm Bureau will distribute “Ag Bags” to legislative and executive offices. The bags contain products representing some of the more than 250 commodities grown in Washington.

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*Editor’s Note: To see the importance of agriculture in your county, please go to the WSDA Web site at [www.agr.wa.gov](http://www.agr.wa.gov) and click on Agriculture – Washington’s No. 1 Employer under Hot Topics. You will find a map that lists farmgate value of production by county along with the top-ranking commodities.*